

# The Register



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The newsletter of the Royal Grammar School, Guildford



## *The Headmaster writes...*

The School is justifiably proud of its heritage and traditions and the Old Building encapsulates so much of the School's 500 year history. The last ten years have seen the rationalisation of the south site to produce facilities which are sensitive to the aesthetic beauty of these Tudor buildings and yet provide an environment which is conducive to the education of boys in the twenty-first century.

The systematic development, which has included the purpose-built Sixth Form Centre and Art School, culminated in January with the opening of the new Music School. This state-of-the-art facility has provided the Music Department with the resources required to continue to nurture musical talent to the very highest level. The School has established an enviable reputation in music and regularly puts on a variety of concerts – solo performances, ensembles, choirs and orchestras – and offers a host of opportunities which caters to a range of interests and passions. In this light, it was fitting that one of the first public events, the annual RGS Musician of the Year competition, should be held in the new rehearsal room as it provided an opportunity to showcase musicianship of exquisite quality to an appreciative audience.

I am very proud of the achievements of all the boys, irrespective of their chosen field, and these improved facilities will, we hope, enable the boys to continue to enjoy the extra-curricular life of the School and to reach their natural potential as they progress through the RGS.







## Singing the Blues

Recent press coverage has focused once again on the challenges faced by students in gaining places at the leading universities in the country. The School is delighted, therefore, to be able to reflect once again on some outstanding success for our current Upper Sixth Form. In securing 34 Oxbridge offers – 16 from Oxford University and 18 from Cambridge University – the boys matched the number of places achieved last year: the sixth successive year in which over 20% of the cohort has been successful in receiving an Oxbridge offer. It is especially pleasing to

see the breadth of subject areas for which offers have been made and the balance between STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects and the Arts and Social Sciences. Of particular note this year were the seven boys who all secured offers from Cambridge to read Natural Sciences. Success has not been limited to Oxbridge and the current cohort has also received record offer rates for Bath, Bristol, Durham and Imperial, as well as over fifty offers from Exeter and Nottingham.

## Turning Over a New Leaf

The theme of this year's World Book Day celebrations was *Science in Fiction*. Best-selling author Malcolm Rose visited the School to explain how his fascination with scientific developments inspired him; he showed how scientists are already fitting bionic limbs and even developing a bionic eye for human use, even if they are not yet as advanced as those used by Jordan Stryker, the hero of his most recent series of books. The highlight for the boys was undoubtedly

the opportunity to shake a £10,000 bionic hand. Dystopian fiction, in which science is used to control the population, then became the focus as the boys had to be on their guard. *Big Brother* was on the look-out from the walls and corridors of the RGS and the *Thought Police* were on patrol. Films, themed lessons, a character hunt and even such culinary delights as Regenerated Dodo, Sandworms and Moon Rocks added to the atmosphere.



## A Chancellor of a Lifetime

**Benjamin Seed** finished runner-up in the national *Chance to be a Chancellor* competition. Benjamin's video submission outlined and justified the policies he would implement if he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. His policies included a 1% unhealthy food tax and tax cuts for companies that create more jobs for young people. As part of his prize, he attended the launch of the Youth Budget held at Number 11 Downing Street and the House of Commons. In addition, six other RGS boys who had entered the competition also attended the event. At the launch, the boys were able to discuss various issues including health, welfare and the environment, providing feedback to a panel of Members of Parliament. During the morning session at Number 11 Downing Street, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, took time out from his busy schedule to discuss current policy themes with the group.





# Scaling New Heights

The final of the RGS Musician of the Year competition proved, once again, to be an inspiring evening of music with performances of quite extraordinary and humbling talent. The event was all the more special as it took place for the first time in the rehearsal room of the new Music School which provided acoustics suitable for such high quality musicianship. The finalists **Joseph Fell** on oboe, **Eric Foster** on piano, **Daniel Innes** on alto saxophone, **Michael Lan** on piano and **Frederick McGee** on violin treated the appreciative audience to a diverse programme. The adjudicator Eric Levi – the academic, author and broadcaster – had the unenviable task of picking a winner. He complimented all the competitors on the quality of their performances but selected Eric Foster as Musician of the Year for his exceptional recital of music by Debussy, Kabalevsky and Slavicky. Director of Music, **Peter White**, commented: "This was a fitting event to grace the new facility: the quality of music was simply breathtaking as all the finalists played with real sensitivity, emotion and technical expertise."







## Double Oooh Seven

Glamour, elegance and sophistication were all on the menu as the tweed jackets and elbow patches of the teaching staff were replaced by black tie for the Casino Royale themed charity ball in aid of the School's international link school in Cambodia. The ball allowed the guests to learn more about the link school from the boys who are about to go out to Cambodia over the summer while also raising money for a significant and sustainable legacy – permanent teachers' accommodation to aid the recruitment of staff. The boys had already raised a phenomenal sum of well over £50,000 towards the cost of the expedition and the boys spoke passionately about the link. The RGS's very own epitome of suave sophistication, **Garth Williams**, as auctioneer ensured that approximately £2,500 was raised from the auction alone as guests were both shaken and stirred for their generous contributions. The casino and dance floor proved equally popular as the evening raised well over £6,000 for the very worthwhile cause.



## In Perfect Kilter

The RGS English Department's Burns Supper and Ceilidh provided an irresistible evening of rhetoric and humour as for one night, leafy Surrey enjoyed a tartan invasion. The evening kicked off with **Phil Leamon** delivering the health and safety brief in a Burns-style poem before **Catherine Moorehead** performed her near-legendary Address to the Haggis, a sight to behold indeed. **Frederick Money** and **Benedict Philipp** serenaded guests beautifully with Burns songs before **Jaya Baldwin** and **Alexander Hartley** performed a truly fantastic version of the Address to the Toothache. **Jeremy Whitaker** gave a brilliant Immortal Memory and then **Adrian Woodman** and **Eleanor McIntyre** 'faced off' in hilarious style with their respective Toast to the Lassies and Toast to the Laddies. The main event of Haggis, Neeps and Tatties was bookended by a lovely Scotch Broth and Cranachan. The dinner and addresses, however, were simply the precursor to an energetic Ceilidh which catered to the many who had no experience, or aptitude, with regard to Scottish dancing.



## To Everyone's Palette



**Ian Alcock** is the latest in a long line of accomplished artists which the School has produced in recent years. Ian is the current holder of the School's prestigious Art's tie; however, of wider significance has been the selection of part of his recent examination portfolio to be included in a nationwide tour showcasing the very best of art among young UK students. His thirst for widening his perspective and benefiting from the input of other artists has led him to attend courses in New York and at Rhode Island School of Design, as well as attending exhibitions throughout the world. He recently completed a prestigious Extended Project Qualification; his submission was entitled *The First Human Clone* and was a reflection on contemporary art and design as seen through philosophy and critical theory. The future for Ian is equally exciting as he has been offered a place to study Art at New York University.





## Desert Island Risks

Audiences enjoyed an outstanding production of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, a challenging play which required the actors to convey the emotional range and subtlety of the characters as well as the more playful aspects of boys going wild, unencumbered by authority. The cast was exceptional in embracing these challenges and gave mature and moving performances with real depth and understanding. **William Cowie** portrayed Piggy with real pathos and truthfulness; **Nicholas Hall**, playing Ralph, gave an equally heartfelt and moving

rendition of the honesty and decency of the character ultimately wrecked by grief at the close of the play. **James Fairley** as Jack and **Matthew Side** as Roger were able subtly to reveal the power dynamics between the two characters as they vied for ultimate power through intimidation and fear. The rest of the cast was similarly accomplished and the quality of acting was highly impressive supported by atmospheric staging, lighting and music which perfectly captured the essence of the island as tension and fear permeated the action.





## A Flurry of Activity

The holidays saw the annual migration of RGS boys and staff from the freezing temperatures of the UK to the equally chilled conditions of the ski slopes of France keen to impress with their skiing technique, snowboarding skills, or simply cutting-edge fashion. The junior trip headed to Tignes while the senior boys ventured to the high alpine resort of Alpe d'Huez. All ski resorts across Europe had a superb start to their seasons with large amounts of snow falling which created excellent skiing conditions. Snow fell all week giving the boys the chance to learn how to ski on fresh powder and how to avoid drifts of several feet which were ready to catch out the unprepared! The boys took part in lessons from an excellent and amenable team from the French Ski School in the mornings; afternoons allowed the boys to put their newly-learned skills to practice. Evening entertainment included bum-boarding, *Invertigo* which is a high-ropes



course over a circus-style safety net, and a visit to an on-snow rally competition. Both trips were a great success and provided the perfect tonic to a busy term.



## Foiling the Opposition

The corridors of the RGS have become used to the cut and thrust of the world of épées as the School's national reputation in fencing has continued to grow. **Laurence Peplow**, the RGS fencing captain, regularly represents Great Britain at international level and was the highest placed British competitor in last year's World Cadet Championships. In the Surrey County Fencing Championships, at Under 16 level, **Thomas Hartley** was crowned County Champion after winning a tense final by the narrowest of margins 15 – 14 against a student from Dulwich College. This was a fine individual achievement in itself but was made all the more noteworthy for the fact that Thomas has only been fencing for a year and a half. Another relative newcomer to the sport **Peter Robinson** also enjoyed an impressive tournament finishing in third place. At Under 18 level, **Sebastian Morton** also finished in third place and **Alexander Hartley** completed a successful day for the Hartley brothers with a seventh placed finish.



## Stickability

Hockey has continued to thrive at the RGS this term and the School has received recognition on the county stage throughout the age groups. In the county tournaments, the RGS are current Under 15 Surrey Champions. The team was undefeated throughout the whole tournament winning all four games, scoring an incredible 17 goals in the process and, equally impressively, only conceding one goal. The Under 14 and Under 18 teams also flew the flag for the RGS by finishing runners-up in the county competitions.



The 1st XI, in particular, has impressed with an eleven-match winning run including excellent victories against Cranleigh School and Portsmouth Grammar School; **Christopher Way** led the goal-scoring charts with well over 25 goals for the season. **Matthew Baggs**, Head of Hockey, commented: "I am obviously delighted that RGS teams are being competitive in what is now a challenging fixture list, including the county and national competitions. What pleases me more, however, is the attractive style of hockey which teams throughout the School are adopting and the fact that we have regularly had 21 different teams representing the School on a Saturday, from the 1st XI all the way down to the Under 12 D team."



# The Highest Calibre

The School has continued its long and distinguished tradition in shooting with a succession of individual and team achievements. A very successful year culminated in the RGS winning the Staniforth Challenge Trophy: this five-bull indoor national trophy is one of the most prestigious competitions run during the indoor season. It was the first time the RGS had won this trophy since 1997 and the fifth time since the end of the Second World War. On an individual level, **Michael Downes** and **Christopher Makowski** became the School's



24th and 25th Athelings since 1962. The Athelings, derived from the Old English word meaning prince or lord, is the title given to UK Cadets, aged under 19 years, who have been successful in the sport of target rifle shooting and represented Great Britain. In addition, **Sebastian Mansley** and **Oliver Woolcott** have both been short-listed for selection for the Great Britain Under 18 team to tour the Channel Islands. Michael, Sebastian and Oliver have all been called into the English Schools' teams to compete in the Home Nations' ten-bull tournament.



## Back of the Net

Favourable comparisons between Barcelona and the RGS 1st XI have been commonplace, especially in Guildford, as the 1st XI has dominated the fixture list. A ten-match winning streak with 53 goals scored and only five conceded has only served to underline the credentials of RGS football. Captained by **Neville Marsh**, the current squad is one of the strongest to have worn the famous red RGS kit. Football at the RGS continues to go from strength to strength with the School now a strong member of the Independent Schools' football circuit. Led by Head of Football, the inimitable **Adam Lowe**, the RGS has developed a growing reputation for playing a stylish and technical brand of football. With the 1st XI having reached the London and South East England Cup semi-final and the Trinity Cup quarter-final, exciting times await RGS football.



# Sports Shorts

**Canoeing:** **Edmund Haws** was nominated by the National Governing Body of Sport to attend the National Talent Orientation Camp (NTOC). The NTOC is run for the country's most talented young sportsmen and women and aims to prepare them for life as a high-performance athlete.

**Rugby:** **Cameron Appel** has been selected for the USA Under 17 rugby squad after a trial in Arizona.

**Swimming:** **Calum Ferguson** is County Champion having won the 100 metre butterfly event at the Surrey School's Swimming Association Gala.

**Fencing:** **Laurence Peplow** represented the Great Britain team which fenced in the final junior international competition of the season held in Gothenburg, Sweden.

**Sailing:** **Tim Gratton** has now moved into the '49er' which is for the Olympic Class high performance and is considered to be the fastest two-person monohull dinghy. In his first international regatta in Spain, he finished an amazing eleventh, which has given him a tremendous boost to the new campaign. Tim has also been selected for the 2012/13 Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) which provides funding and support to talented athletes.







## Wheelie Good

The RGS, in recent years, has boasted sporting success in sports as diverse as canoeing, ice hockey, and polo; however, the School has, disappointingly, failed to make



any impact upon the world of motorcycling in its otherwise distinguished 500-year history. This, however, has changed with the emergence of **Joseph Lethbridge** in the Second Form. He first started riding a motorcycle at the age of six and has been competing in adult and schoolboy motorcycle trials ever since, winning a number of championships along the way. Joseph won the 2012 Thames Valley Trials Championships; this followed his victory in the Surrey Schoolboy Trials Club Championships. For those uninitiated in the world of bikes, Joseph explained the terrain: "Trials are held all year round and in any weather. The location will usually be a remote hillside or quarry on a farm somewhere. It is a really friendly non-contact sport; the only contact you have is, unfortunately, with the ground from time to time!"

## Flippin' Fantastic

The gloom of the bleak winter months was temporarily lifted by the inaugural inter-house pancake race on Shrove Tuesday, as staff and boys alike proved that they can be alarmingly competitive irrespective of the event. The challenge, complete with a definitive set of rules, stewards to monitor the technique and number of tosses and pancakes supplied by the School to ensure no foul play, drew a large, mostly bewildered, audience. Proceedings started with the



Housemaster and House Captain's 50 metre relay and ended with the staff 50 metre sprint; in between, each year group had their opportunity to secure pancake glory in the RGS Hall of Fame. Despite early success by Austen House thanks to **Tony Dubois** and **Alexander Saunders**, Beckingham House proved overall victors. Boys were left battered and licking their wounds as tales were regaled throughout the School of pancakes won and lost.



## Purring on the Catwalk

The annual Fashion Show at Guildford High School, organised by a dynamic team of their Sixth Form girls, raised money for the Alice Ramsay Trust, a charity set up in memory of a former GHS Head Girl who died of a brain tumour. This year's theme was *Inspiration from the Ages*: starting with *The Big Bang* and going through to *Futuristic*. The RGS boys needed little persuasion to sign up for the *Wall Street* section where they modelled clothes inspired by the preppy American look. Swagger and strut were the order of the day as the boys clearly enjoyed themselves. Of particular note was the *Debutante* performance where they accompanied the girls down the catwalk dressed in sophisticated evening wear and the firm favourite *Old School* where the boys were clad in their own outgrown junior school blazers, ties and shorts. The evening raised a phenomenal £6,800 for the Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign, the most ever raised from the Fashion Show.

